



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Environmental Center**  
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0485

## HB 1578 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Statement for House Committee on  
Energy, Ecology, and Environmental Protection  
Public Hearing, 28 February 1983

By  
Doak C. Cox, Environmental Center  
L. Stephen Lau, Water Resources Research Center  
Gordon Dugan, Civil Engineering

HB 1578 proposes, through amendments to two sections of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, to transfer the direct oversight of private sewage treatment plants from the Department of Health to the counties. This statement on the bill does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The functions that would be transferred by HB 1578 are, specifically: "The regulation of the design, construction, and operation of private wastewater treatment works." The actual transfer would be accomplished through the amendment of a section relating to functions reassigned by the state to the counties that is still included in the HRS chapter on State functions. The amendment of that section would be accompanied, however, by an amendment of the Environmental Quality Act providing that the ordinances and rules adopted by the counties to govern the regulation of the sewage treatment plants, as those governing other transferred functions, must include standards at least as strict as those of the Department of Health.

We note that all of the counties operate sewage treatment plants, for that reason, there are personnel in each county with pertinent competence, and that the counties may well be able to exercise oversight of the private sewage treatment plants more effectively than the Department of Health.